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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

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(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "WHEN YOU COOK LAMB AND VEAL." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, United States Department of Agriculture.

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The topic for today is meats for the spring menu. Old-fashioned housekeepers often refer to the young meats, lamb and veal, as "spring meats". Well, in a sense they are spring meats. And then in a sense they aren't. Lamb comes on the market in largest quantities in spring and fall, but it is available the year around. The supply of veal is always largest in the spring, but you can buy this meat also at any other time of year. Along about now your butcher may be offering "specials" in lamb and veal. Of course, if you are going to make the most of these meats, if you are to get your money's worth in flavor and food value and so on, you need to know the simple principles of cooking them. So I'm going to pass along to you some helpful hints from meat cookery specialists.

You might suppose that, since lamb and veal are both young meats with all cuts tender, you would cook them in just the same way. But you don't. One important difference in the make-up of these two meats makes a difference in the cooking. It is this: lamb contains a good deal of fat, and veal is usually a very lean meat. So you will find it easier to keep lamb juicy during cooking than veal. In fact, many people say they don't care for veal because it is dry and stringy and lacks flavor. The answer to that objection is: "You aren't using the right cooking method." If you want the best results, make the method suit the meat.

Let's discuss the whys and wherefores of cooking veal and lamb, remembering that they are alike in being young and tender, but different in fat content. Let's talk about roasting first, since roast lamb and roast veal are both old favorites, and since you can roast the same cuts in lamb and veal. The most popular roast is probably the leg. A favorite roast of veal is the thigh cut of the leg. The shoulder, loin and breast are also good roasting cuts. Some of the finest roasts -- and the easiest to carve -- are the boned and stuffed shoulders of lamb and veal. Then, the saddle roast of lamb corresponds to the loin roast of veal. A very inexpensive roast from either animal is the stuffed breast. In lamb, this makes a small roast about right for serving three or four persons.

Now about this cooking method known as roasting: How does the process differ with lamb and veal? Well, since lamb is a fat meat, you season your roast, dust with flour and lay it flat side up, on a rack in an open roasting pan. You add no water to the pan. And you don't baste the roast. As the fat

melts, it will do its own basting. Start by searing the lamb for half an hour in a hot oven about 480 degrees F., and then reduce the heat to very moderate -- about 300 degrees, and continue roasting until the meat is done. Allow about half an hour to the pound. If you have an oven that you can't adjust quickly to different temperatures -- an oven in a coal or wood stove, say -- why then, omit the searing at the beginning and roast at moderate heat -- 350 degrees F., during the entire time. Remember -- for lamb, an open roasting pan, no water added, no basting.

With veal the story is quite different, for veal is a lean meat. It needs the protection of a covered roaster. And if you like you may add fat by larding with strips of salt pork or suet or bacon. Adding fat not only helps keep the roast juicy, but also improves its flavor. Season your roast with salt and pepper first. Then dust with flour. Place the meat on a rack, as you did your lamb roast, having the skin-side of the roast up. Cover the roaster and put it into a moderately hot oven -- one that registers from 375 to 400 degrees. No searing first with veal roast. Cook the roast until well done and tender. By the time it is done, it will have a brown surface and the drippings also will be nicely brown for gravy. Some people like roast beef rare; some even like lamb rather rare; but veal and pork are the two meats that you always cook well done. Remember then -- for a veal roast, use a covered roaster; add strips of fat to keep the meat juicy and to add flavor; and use a moderately hot oven throughout the cooking. So much for the roasting process.

These same general rules apply in the case of chops. Lamb chops are best broiled by direct heat or pan-broiled in an uncovered frying pan. Veal chops and veal cutlets need different treatment. They need cooking in the presence of moisture and added fat. Probably the best way to cook them is to flour or bread them; then to brown them in fat; then to cover them closely and cook slowly. Allow half to three-quarters of an hour to be sure they are tender. Serve them with gravy made from the drippings. The difference in cooking here, as in roasting, is due to the difference in the amount of fat in these two meats.

The less expensive cuts of veal or lamb, or the tidbits will make many delicious dishes. Lamb and veal stew are both justly famous. Then there's lamb pie, or veal-and-pork pie -- both in reality just stews with a crust over them. Ground veal, combined with chopped salt pork makes an excellent meat loaf. You can use either ground lamb or ground veal in patties. Left-over cooked veal or lamb you can use in spicy curry; in hash; or in chop suey. These meats combine well with many different vegetables and seasonings.

Once more, the chief points to remember about cooking lamb and veal are: they are both young and tender, but lamb, having plenty of fat, can be roasted or broiled, while veal is usually lacking in fat, and therefore, needs the protection of a covered pan and usually also needs added fat.

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